

# Social-Emotional Learning at School

## SEL Competencies

Quality holistic learning for refugees  
and internally displaced children



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## AGENDA

- Reconnection
- Review of the SEL Skills Wheel (CASEL Framework)
- Activities related to each SEL competency
- Closing reflections

### Thanks

This workshop is developed with the help of several experts including Julie Kasper, Alison Joyner and Allie Simmons with the wise advice of the teaching team in Niger.



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## Learning Objectives for today



At the end of the day, you will be able to:

- Identify desirable socio-emotional qualities and skills in the national or local context.
- Adapt and apply simple activities that reinforce students' social-emotional learning



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## Reconnection

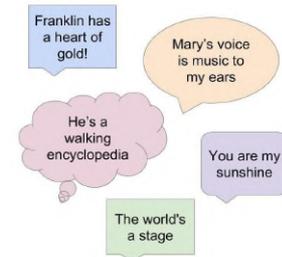
Complete the following sentence with a creative metaphor or comparison.

**Social-emotional learning is ...**

Examples of metaphors:

### Metaphors

*Strengthening team spirit*

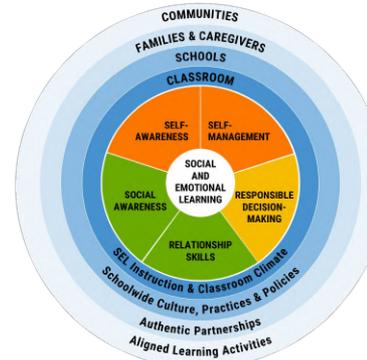


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# Let's discuss in detail

# The wheel of social-emotional skills



According to CASEL, the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework](#)

<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

### SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- ▷ IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ▷ ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- ▷ RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- ▷ SELF-CONFIDENCE
- ▷ SELF-EFFICACY

### SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ▷ IMPULSE CONTROL
- ▷ STRESS MANAGEMENT
- ▷ SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ▷ SELF-MOTIVATION
- ▷ GOAL SETTING
- ▷ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

### SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ▷ PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- ▷ EMPATHY
- ▷ APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- ▷ RESPECT FOR OTHERS

### RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ▷ COMMUNICATION
- ▷ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- ▷ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ▷ TEAMWORK

### RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

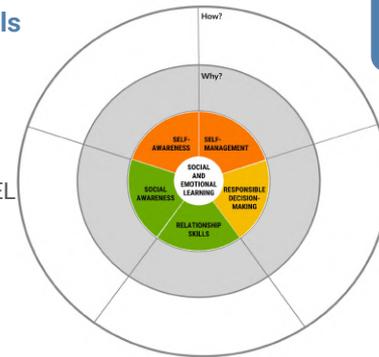
- ▷ IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ▷ ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- ▷ SOLVING PROBLEMS
- ▷ EVALUATING
- ▷ REFLECTING
- ▷ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY



# Group Discussion - Social and emotional skills

Group activity on paper

Discuss the importance of SEL skills and how they can be strengthened/developed.



## SEL activities to try!

You will now learn some simple SEL activities that you can do with your students in the classroom or in the playground.

We invite you to put yourself in the shoes of your students and try the activities with the help of your facilitator who will play the role of a teacher.

Then, exchange your reflections to allow the group to adapt or propose other activities.

In particular, think about:

- the cultural and social appropriateness of each activity,
- its applicability with your particular students,
- the right moment to introduce or incorporate it into a lesson.



## Social Awareness



What, from your perspective, are the skills encompassed in this SEL competency?

What qualities would we like to help students develop in relation to social awareness?

## Social knowledge and awareness



This includes:

- Taking into account the point of view of others
- Recognizing the strengths of others
- Showing empathy and compassion
- Appreciating diversity and difference
- Considering (and showing concern for) the feelings of others
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- Identifying various social norms, including unfair norms
- Recognizing the demands and opportunities in each social situation
- Identifying family, school and community resources and supports

## Activity 1: Open Minds, Open Hearts



**First step- Group discussion:**

duration: 10-15 min

Form groups of students and have them sit in circles if possible.

### Individual reflection

Ask each student to think of a time when he/she first met someone different of the same age and felt nervous talking to them.

### Group discussion

- Invite a student or two from each group to share their experience.
- Ask some of the following questions:
  - How was the person different?
  - Why feel nervous? Is it the fear of difference?
  - How did he/she act?
  - What does he/she think of their reaction? Would he/she change his/her attitude in similar future situations?
- Ask the group to come up with a positive way to talk to people different from us.

## Activity 1 - continued: Open Minds, Open Hearts



**Group Reflection-** Discuss and explain to students the following points:

- **Fear reactions-why?**  
People are sometimes afraid of differences with others who may come from different backgrounds, speak differently, have a different disability, learn differently, or not physically resemble the majority of those around them
- **Consequences**  
Fear makes us miss out on what makes life rich, so we may not be open to knowing different people who can teach us a lot.
- **Replace fear with love**  
Discuss the idea of making the conscious choice of love over fear, and talk about how students can make this decision intentionally in their interactions with others.

## Activity 1 - continued: Open Minds, Open Hearts



**Second stage - "Desert Rose! Open up"**

Each group of students sits in a circle to perform the following choreography which symbolizes openness, in order to have a visual reminder to stay open in their minds and hearts.

- Everyone bends/bows into a ball, making themselves as small as possible.
- The teacher walks around the learning space looking at the closed "roses".
- When all the students are in place, the teacher says aloud: "Rose of the desert! Open up!", everyone gets up and opens with energy. Students can shout, laugh or remain silent; there are no rules, except that they must open up to the world around them with joy!



## Activity 2: Telephone



**Part One - The Game** (10-15 minutes for parts 1 & 2)

Each group of students forms a circle

- The teacher chooses one student from each group and asks them to start the game by whispering in the ear of his/her neighbor on the left the following sentence: "I want to know what it feels like to listen and what it feels like to be heard."
- Each student whispers what they hear in the next person's ear, all the way to the last student.
- The last student shares what he heard with the class.

It is highly likely that the final sentence is very different from the original whispered sentence!

**Part Two - The Discussion**

Discuss the following questions in class :

1. What happened to the original message?
2. Was it difficult or easy to hear the message? Why?
3. What should be done to ensure correct transmission?



## Activity 2: Telephone - Objectives to be discussed



The telephone game is an exercise of **active listening** allowing students to also practice with **clear communication**. Students learn that:

- It is very important to speak clearly,
- establish good eye contact, and use clear body language
- pay close attention to what another person is saying to fully understand the message they want to share.
- how rumors can be created and that, in order to get the truth, one must go directly to the source.

**In addition**

The teacher can also address gossip and how to avoid it :

the best approach when talking about another person is to ask yourself, "Would I say the same thing if I spoke to that person, rather than talking about them?"

## Group Discussion



Discuss the feasibility of the two activities and adaptations that could be made:

- How to do these activities in overcrowded classes?
- Is it possible to take students out into the courtyard?
- Would these activities work well in a language course? Other subject courses?

## Interpersonal (Relationship) Skills



What are these skills?  
What qualities would we like  
to help students develop?



## Interpersonal (Relationship) Skills



This includes:

- Communicating clearly and effectively
- Developing positive relationships
- Demonstrating cultural competence open to diversity
- Navigating effectively in environments where social and cultural requirements and opportunities are different
- Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem solving
- Resolving conflicts constructively
- Resisting negative social pressure
- Demonstrating leadership in groups
- Seeking or offering support and help when needed
- Defending the rights of others

## Activity 3: Kindness Detectives



**Step One - Reflection & Discussion** (10-15 minutes + a day of observation)

- Invite students to think of a gesture of kindness that someone in their life has done for them.
- Start a discussion about **the meaning of kindness**.

**Step Two - Observation**

Designate one or two students as "kindness detectives" for the day. They are responsible for noting (without commenting) small acts of kindness that they have observed in their classmates.  
*E.g. opening a door to someone, sharing something, smiling warmly at a friend.*

**Step Three - Report and Final Reflection**

Before the end of the day (or the next period), detectives will report to the class on what they saw when they "caught their friends in the act" of being kind to each other.

**Conclude by emphasizing the objective of the activity: To make kindness a priority.**

Repeat the activity periodically.

## Activity 4: Circle of Compliments



Duration: 5-10 minutes

To get to know ourselves better, it is sometimes useful to hear from the people around us what they think our strengths are.

1. Organize students in pairs and ask them to compliment each other.
2. Invite a few students to share aloud the compliment they gave to their buddies.
3. Discuss with the group the effect of compliments and kind words.

### Objectives of the activity:

- Students learn what others consider to be their strengths and sharing and exchanging with another student provides a better understanding of the reciprocal nature of relationships,
- Students recognize that we all have our own strengths.
- They recognize the positive impact that kind and sincere words can have on a person's prospects.

## Group Discussion



Discuss the feasibility of the two activities and adaptations that could be made:

- How might you do these activities in overcrowded classes?
- When would you plan to offer such activities?
- Is it useful to repeat these two activities periodically?
- Is there the possibility to do the activity in a language course (or other subject area)?

## A mental break!



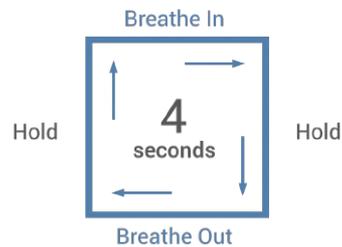
### "Square" breathing:

I will accompany you, counting for you,

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable position.
2. Inhale through your nose for four seconds.
3. Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
4. Exhale through the mouth for four seconds.
5. Keep the lungs empty for 4 seconds.

Repeat four times.

Share how you feel after the fourth breath.



## Responsible decision-making



What are these skills?  
What qualities would we like to help students develop?



## Responsible decision-making



This includes :

- Making caring and constructive choices about your behaviour.
- Being curious and open-minded.
- Learning to make reasoned judgments after analyzing information, data and facts.
- Taking into account ethical standards and safety issues.
- Identifying solutions to personal and social problems.
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions for oneself and for others.
- Recognizing the value of critical thinking in and out of school.
- Reflecting on one's role in promoting personal, family and community well-being.

## Activity 5: Divide into pieces



### Step One - Intro

Explain to the students that:

- it may be useful to think only of the immediate future and
- that it makes more sense to put energy into the things they can control than into the things they can't.

### Step Two - Group Discussion

Form groups and have students participate in a discussion and draw up two lists:

- A list of what they can control
  - E.g., how they approach their school work,
  - how they will choose to respond if someone says or does a hurtful act
- A list of what they can't control
  - E.g., war or conflict at the borders

## Activity 5 - continued: Divide into pieces



### Step Three - Strategy Proposal

- Explain that in times when students feel overwhelmed with out-of-control situations, they may think of things in "pieces", or small chunks, as these are much easier to manage and can be treated with tangible results.
- Give an example of your context,
  - *Example to inspire you: A student may worry about their mother who is exhausted caring for her younger siblings in a living space so noisy and cluttered that she can't sleep. It sounds pretty overwhelming, but if the student sets an achievable goal, such as "I'll take care of my little sister tomorrow night so my mom can get some sleep," it will help them feel like they have the ability to positively influence things for the family...*
- Invite a few students to share examples of situations with proposals for achievable goals for them.

## Activity 6: Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan



This activity is also known as "WOOP".

Use the script below to guide students in creating their own WOOP :

**Wish** : What do you really want to accomplish? This wish must be exciting and challenging, but realistic. (For example: "I would like to complete my homework early more often to be able to go out and play.")

**Outcome** : What is the best outcome that would result from the accomplishment of this goal? How would the outcome make you feel? Let your mind go and imagine this result. (For example: "I will enjoy playing more often" or "I would feel more confident and accomplished.")

## Activity 6 - continued: Wish, outcome, obstacle, plan



**Obstacle** : What is the personal obstacle that prevents you from achieving this goal? Visualize this obstacle.

(For example: "When I do my homework, I am often distracted by my phone and I lose my concentration.")

**Plan**: What can you do to overcome your obstacle? Name one effective action you can take and use it to create an if/then plan:

→ If/when \_\_\_\_\_ (obstacle), then I will \_\_\_\_\_ (effective action).

*For example: "If I'm distracted by my phone while I'm studying, then I'll place it far away from me or put it in a drawer."*

Then schedule a follow-up time with your students to **self-assess** their ability to keep their personal commitments.

## Group Discussion



Discuss the feasibility of the two activities and adaptations that could be made to them:

- Can these activities be used for collective goals for the whole class?
- Is it useful to repeat these two activities periodically?

## Self-awareness



What are these skills?  
What qualities would we like to help students develop?



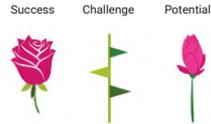
## Self-awareness



This includes:

- Integrating personal and social identities
- Identifying personal, cultural and linguistic assets as well as limitations
- Identifying and understanding your emotions
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity
- Examining prejudice and bias
- Experiencing self-efficacy
- Having a growth mindset
- Developing interests and setting goals

## Activity 7: Rose, thorn and bud



Explain to students the meaning of this metaphor

**Rose** = A highlight, a **success**, a small victory or something positive that happened.

**Thorn** = A **challenge** you've been through or something you need more support with

**Bud** = New ideas that have **potential** or something you can't wait to learn more about or experience.

Ask everyone to think of a rose, a bud, and a thorn in their day or week. This allows students to describe their emotions and reflect on the positive aspects and challenges of their day, week or month. Take a moment to allow a few to share their thoughts.

## Activity 8: The lights inside us! Introduction to meditation



Briefly introduce the concept of mindfulness meditation:

*"The practice is to focus on the present moment, allowing thoughts to pass through our minds without naming or judging them as positive or negative, instead observing thoughts like wagons in a train or clouds in the sky, silently crossing our consciousness."*

Explain why it's useful :

*"The practice of mindfulness could have an impact on brain development and improves attention control and emotion-regulating skills in adolescents, which in turn impacts their self-regulation and coping skills."*

Invite students to a brief visualization exercise: "I'm going to take you on a trip to a beautiful place." The text to be read is available on a printed sheet.

## Group Discussion



Discuss the feasibility of the two activities and adaptations that could be made to them :

- Can the activity of the rose-thorn-bud be used for other purposes, for example during academic lessons?
- How often should these two activities be repeated?
- Are you ready to experiment and adapt other meditations?

## Self-management



What are these skills?  
What qualities would we like to help students develop?



## Self-management



This includes:

- Managing your emotions
- Identifying and using stress management strategies
- Demonstrating self-regulation and self-motivation
- Setting personal and collective goals
- Using planning and organizational skills
- Showing courage to take initiative
- Demonstrating personal and collective autonomy

## Activity 9: The glass half full



### Step One - Reflection

- Invite each student to think of a situation they consider negative, frightening, or problematic in their lives.
- Ask everyone to review all facets of the situation in question and **try to find good sides to the situation.**

### Step Two - Group Discussion

Take the time to allow a few students to share their situations and feelings, then work together to try to show "the full half of the glass" or how to "press the button" to bring the light.

### Example - The pandemic

Think about covid and quarantine, and the impact it has had on everyone. For example:

- isolation can be very negative
- but it has strengthened family relationships
- and solidarity and compassion have developed in the community.

## Activity 9: The glass half full - Objective



### Growth Mindset is key to building tenacity and building resilience

Such a mentality confirms that we are not limited by our inherent abilities, that **we always have learning potential**, and that we can change our circumstances by making efforts to do so.

This activity teaches students **to reframe situations** with their good and bad sides, which is a first step induced by a growth mentality.

"Looking at the glass as half full" encourages students to develop a habit of learning from challenges and finding the good, even in difficult or stressful situations.

## Activity 10: Breathe to calm down



### Step One - Explanation

Explain to students: "When we feel fear, sadness, anger, or any other unpleasant emotion, our breath tends to weaken or accelerate. When we learn to breathe deeply, as simple as it may seem, we begin to better manage our emotions.

Taking deep breaths during and after we are faced with emotionally intense situations, helps us relax and feel calmer."

## Activity 10 - continued: Breathe to calm down



### Step Two – Practice

Tell students: "We will practice together. You have to go through the different stages of breathing slower and more intense than normal, but without forcing. Try:

1. Inhale deeply through your nose, **counting to 4** in your head while you breathe in.
2. Hold your breath while you **count up to 4** in your head again.
3. Release the air, again through your nose, while you **count to 8** in your head, silently repeating, "I feel calm, I feel relaxed."
4. Repeat the cycle again 3-4 times.

## Activity 11: Our Circle of Control



### Step One - Discussion

Start by discussing with students what situations you can or cannot control.

### Step Two - Artistic Expression

- Invite students to each take a blank sheet of paper and draw a circle on it. It will represent their circle of control
- Tell them to draw or write inside the circle, situations they can control, and draw or write outside the circle, situations they can't control.

**Objective of the activity:** This can help **calm children and adults** who suffer from anxiety in times of uncertainty.

## Group Discussion



Discuss the last proposed activities and adaptations that could be made to them :

- When and how often should these activities be repeated?
- How do you think the glass half-full activity can be adapted in overcrowded classes?

## Take and offer a mental break !



**Ideas to practice with your students or your colleagues or alone:**

- Rhythmic breaths
- Movements in place
- Stretching
- Coffee or tea



**And you, what do you do for a short break?**

# Final Reflections

## A 3-2-1 reflection



Think about and write on a piece of paper the following:

- **3 new concepts** you discovered today
- **2 SEL activities** that you think you can apply tomorrow
- **1 question** or concern that remains to be overcome

Discuss your answers with a colleague next to you and then all together in the group.

## Are our Learning Objectives achieved?

On a score of 1-10 how would you rate your mastery of today's objectives?

To what extent are you able to

1. Identify desirable socio-emotional qualities and skills in your local context
2. Adapt and apply simple activities that reinforce students' social-emotional learning

Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

# Thank you for your participation!

Send your questions and remarks to  
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